

Halo: Fight for Survival

by Randal Flagg

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Summary: Destruction is imminent, and failure close, the UNSC continue to fight. Halo: Fight for Survival is a collaborative work brought to you by Legatoblue, Norijutsu, and Lt, introducing new characters and new weapons to the great universe of Halo.

1. Ship Manifest

This is a collaborative story brought to you by Juggernaut Studios. The main authors are Legatoblue, Norijutsu, and Lt (me). We have decided that while we have our fun creating this story together on an online forum. Meanwhile I'd keep it updated as much as possible with everything that is going on. So everyone needs to know that we do not own Halo or anything related to the video game and novels. On the other hand, I do own Spartan-019: Leito Rousseau since he's actually a character that I made and developed. Norijutsu developed the MA6B Pulse Action Assault Rifle, a weapon used frequently throughout this fan fic, so if you ever want to use that weapon send me a message and I will relay it to him. xD HOWEVER we/I do not own any of the other Spartans so please feel free to use them however you want in your stories. Send me a message if you wish to use Spartan-019 in whatever story it may be.

* * *

><p>VerCrouse

**(In Orbit above Belfast) **

Five of the massive Magnetic Accelerator Cannon Orbital Defense Stations silently hovered in orbit above Belfast Base. With these being the latest and greatest models to have been produced, with a more rapid rate of fire, they would easily wipe out any small Covenant force that decided to threaten the only major ship-building facilities of the UNSC that remained active. Even though these structures could easily defend the base, they struggled to be the homes of the thousands of personnel that drifted by continuously on

their usual routes. With Reach gone, VerCrouse was now desperately needed for the UNSC to remain as some form of a threat to the Covenant.

With thoughts on human extermination in mind, the Admiralty gladly dedicated a few dozen vessels to guarding Belfast. Even though they had to keep the Covenant from destroying or capturing this base, they could only separate their main forces so much. After the losses at Reach, most of the remaining vessels have been called back to Earth. VerCrouse is one of the only remaining places besides Earth that the UNSC has some form of control over. With only five MAC Stations, however, many questioned how long this base would survive with a large support fleet. Reach had over two-times as many of them, and they were ripped to shreds. Of course, no one thought that the Covenant would actually attack in such great numbers again.

****Defenses: ****

UNSCDF - ODA348 Arta Defense Platform
> UNSCDF - ODA349 Mani Defense Platform
 UNSCDF - ODA350 Uppsala Defense Platform
> UNSCDF - ODA351 Bristol Defense Platform
 UNSCDF - ODA352 Zenith Defense Platform

****VerCrouse UNSC Naval Forces:****

UNSC Marathon-class Cruiser _Pflanze_ (Sixth Fleet Flagship)
> UNSC Marathon-class Cruiser Monterey
> UNSC Marathon-class Cruiser Amengald

UNSC Carrier _Kasperek_
> UNSC Carrier Titan

(The Kasperek, Titan, and Dalziel make up the last three remaining Carriers in the UNSC fleet)

UNSC Destroyer _Farragut_ , DDG-86
> UNSC Destroyer Nitze , DDG-98
> UNSC Destroyer Decatur, DDG-72
> UNSC Destroyer Stethem, DDG-104
> UNSC Destroyer Ramage, DDG-113
> UNSC Destroyer Chafee, DDG-94

UNSC Frigate _Shinobi_ , FFG-169
> UNSC Frigate Ingraham , FFG-173
> UNSC Frigate Thach , FFG-121
> UNSC Frigate Vandegrift , FFG-149
> UNSC Frigate Klarkring , FFG-107
> UNSC Frigate Jarrett , FFG-178
> UNSC Frigate Geiger , FFG-177
> UNSC Frigate Kearsage , FFG-132
> UNSC Frigate Bataan , FFG-168
> UNSC Frigate Nassau, FFG-170
> UNSC Frigate Arago , FFG-164
> UNSC Frigate Fitzgerald, FFG-143

CCS-class Assault Carrier _Resilient Travesty_
> UEF Valkyrie Rose QD3-18-F Heavy Transport Ship/Light Cruiser

2. Probing for Safety

Deforming the Silhouette of space, the UNSC _Armengald_ appears like a specter in the night heading towards the Planet. Its thrusters slowed their mighty thrust and the ship began to become silent. The light from the planet illuminated the battle damage of the outer armor. At the ships aft end, something seemed to break the silence. Drop Pod A3 on Deck D5 began launching procedures as the monstrous doors opened, pushing the small craft out with incredible force as it plummeted towards the planet.

o o o

Rear Admiral Roland Delaney gazed at the large screen he stood in front of on his Orbital Defense platform, appearing to display simply a large spot of empty space away from his planet. They'd received reports from several of their monitoring stations a good distance from VerCrouse, all stating that one large mass was on a course toward them. Of course, they never painted a perfect picture for them, so they couldn't be sure of what it was just yet. If it was friendly, it would have called home and told its parents it was heading back, but this wasn't the case. Roland simply watched and waited, eager to know what was nearing his point of command.

Over one-hundred kilometers from the nearest OD station, a fairly empty point of space cracked and sizzled, before peeling back and allowing a small Covenant Frigate to enter back into reality. The sleek vessel was only halfway out of its slip-space tunnel before three MAC rounds ripped directly through the ship's shields and armor and easily shattered the vessel. Without a means to maintain their exit vector, slip-space was once again closed off to the universe and sealed away the rest of the wreckage for eternity. Only small chunks of the once advanced ship remained in normal space for the UNSC to clean up, the five "smart" AI's of the MAC platforms having worked with their slip-space drones and calculated the optimal point of entry into regular space for the vessel if it had planned to examine their planet and fired three shots several seconds ago. They would take no risks.

The Admiral knew they'd come looking for their lost ship soon enough with greater numbers, so they would now have to worry about the upcoming assault on their base. He sighed and rubbed his tired eyes, having been staring at a screen for hours now and needing some form of a break, but knew it wasn't possible...especially now. He had to contact Earth somehow and ask for possible reinforcements. He doubted he would get any, especially after sending out some of his own ships toward the rescue of some UNSC forces on some unknown planet. He hadn't been told all the details, but he had his orders. They hadn't heard anything from them in a while, though, so he assumed they wouldn't arrive to help. The only help he actually expected was from Captain Vincent Millay and the rest of his battle-group, not knowing where the hell they were coming from as he began planning for their upcoming battle.

///AUTOMATED REROUTE: UNSC SLIP-S PROBE XB-021-049/// REROUTE
ENABLED///

///AUTOMATED REROUTE: UNSC SLIP-S PROBE XB-015-026/// REROUTE

ENABLED///

///AUTOMATED REROUTE: UNSC SLIP-S PROBE XB-007-009/// REROUTE
ENABLED///

///AUTOMATED REROUTE: UNSC SEC-III SAT BD-000462/// REROUTE
ENABLED///

///AUTOMATED REROUTE: UNSC SEC-III SAT BD-000224/// REROUTE
ENABLED///

///AUTOMATED REROUTE: UNSC SEC-III SAT BD-000045/// REROUTE
ENABLED/// ENCRYPTION CODE REQUIRED/// FILE ACCESS GRANTED///

United Nations Space Command Priority Transmission

> 01724H-99
 Encryption Code: Theta

> Public Key: NA

> From: Captain Vincent Millay , Commanding Officer , UNSC

Titan/ (UNSC Service Number: 00769-19485-VM)

> To: Rear Admiral Roland Delaney , Commanding Officer , UNSC

VerCrouse Naval Forces (UNSC Service Number: 01938-19344-RD)

> Subject: Theta Group Approach
 Classification: RESTRICTED (BD
Directive)

/START FILE/

> Delaney,<p>

We're finally returning from our classified mission, which I'm sure you're no doubt aware of. We've suffered losses to our Marine divisions, but none to our ships. You can take some comfort in knowing you've got a few more guns to guard that wreck of a planet you call a fortress. We have all the same warships and more. We've got a captured Covenant warship behind us, so don't go blasting away. We've become allies with a group of Pirates, whose ships will all be tagged against our radar. Specifications on the captured vessel, Pirate ship lists, and our incoming coordinates are attached. Specifications on our mission aren't on the menu yet, but will be when I've had a good deal of rest. Oh, and remember: DON'T SHOOT.

Respect,

> Millay
 /END FILE/

> Press ENTER to open linked attachments<p>

Press ENTER to close the file.

o o o

Space wavered unsteadily before tearing itself open once more near the UNSC front lines of VerCrouse, only with a slightly different outcome. Rather than being greeted with massive MAC rounds like the poor Covenant Frigate, the UNSC forces that appeared remained intact. There was a large Carrier with a much smaller Frigate close by, followed by the even more massive Covenant Assault Carrier known as Resilient Travesty, which had by then been scanned and looked through fairly well. The UNSC would have written the moment a Covenant vessel was captured intact and successfully brought back to UNSC-controlled space, had their focus not been on what followed their allies. Only a dozen of the largest Pirate vessels appeared the rest of their ships without slip-space capabilities housed safely within them as they

entered hostile territory, mostly thanks to politics.

The battle group gladly accelerated toward the planet and its fairly safe surrounding forces, Vincent gazing upon the ships that encircled it with a good sense of relief. They'd been against overwhelming odds for too long, and it'd do those good to even get a little assistance thanks to greater numbers. He quickly opened up a channel with their guardian Frigate, the Ingraham, and watched as Captain Alfred Sage's face appeared in the corner of his personal side-screen. Whenever he saw the man these days, he could only think of how amazingly short he truly was when met in person, though he still managed to respect him somewhat after he was assigned along with the Shinobi to guard his and Resnick's ships during their fairly dangerous mission. He decided to save a long farewell for later in life as he spoke through their COM channel. "Sage, split off, re-supply, and join the rest of the fleet in orbit." The man simply nodded in acknowledgement, saluted quickly, and cut off the channel.

The relatively tiny Frigate curved away from the Titan, heading towards one of their MAC platforms to re-supply as ordered. He watched the vessel leave his side and gave his silent thanks, before turning his attention toward their own target, the center Orbital Defense station in their formation of five, which acted as their staging center above Belfast. The place also acted as a home for Rear Admiral Delaney, who he was sure expected him to visit as soon as possible once his Carrier docked and began the long and annoying task of repairs, taking inventory, finding out what is missing and replacing it, as well as issuing a little down time for their over-worked soldiers. He quickly input one more command into his terminal before getting up finally, walking from his bridge to find his superior. His command easily slipped through the Titan's computers to ever Marine barrack and mess hall on his ship, ordering them to get off their asses, get off his ship, and to get some rest. Vincent still felt he had plenty of work left to do, and, sadly, they'd all have to be dealing with a great new threat.

Every Pelican within the Titan's massive docking bay fired up its engines as the order to leave was given, each being fairly overloaded with Marines. The tiny ships slipped into the 'open', before darting towards VerCrouse, passing beneath a much larger Marathon-class Cruiser as they moved into the planet's gravity, letting it take them down and over Belfast Base, which was going to be their home for some time now.

A passing by Marathon-class Cruiser was easily dwarfed by the Uppsala Station as it stood defiant against any enemy, the barrel-end of the massive Magnetic Accelerator Cannon it housed pointing out toward the unlimited void that hid its target. Captain Vincent Millay wandered deep within the armored hull, becoming too used to the artificial atmosphere and gravity the UNSC provided as he headed off to meet with the Admiral. He'd given what he would say to the old man very little thought. He didn't bother dressing formally and stuck with his usual Captain's uniform. He'd been told that any formalities would have to be skipped due to an urgent matter, and he could only feel a slight sense of dread upon hearing that, thinking he should prepare for the worst as he moved through the station.

He casually glanced to his right, through the thick, reinforced windows beside him that lined this passage as he admired the ships

around him. He was happy to see so many UNSC vessels in once place, the last time he'd seen such a thing being at Reach before it was taken from them. He shifted his attention back to the inside of the station, nearing his purpose for being up here. He strode up to a large doorway that looked slightly different from the others, and grinned as it parted automatically with a small hiss. The room within was the lively bridge of the station, dozens of officers scrambling about to order and confirm orders concerning the dozens of ships that made up their fleet.

The calmest man in the room, almost with a gloomy aura about him, was Rear Admiral Roland Delaney. He simply stood there and stared at a large screen which appeared to have readouts scrolling along it, possibly from one of the vast numbers of Clarion Spy Drones that surrounded the planet and constantly observed the space around them. Once he was behind the man he quickly stomped his foot down in the process of straightening up to announce his presence, saluting quickly and deciding he didn't want to act too comfortable around an Admiral with so much subordinates around. The man slowly turned to gaze at the source of his interruption, his face hiding his fatigue well, though his tired eyes gave his long hours of worry away.

The Captain expected some form of mild joy to be exposed upon the man seeing Vincent alive once more, but any of that was lost in his words as he spoke to him in a dull tone. "At ease, Millay...We've got a problem..." Vincent saved any disappointment for later, and shoved back any false hopes of a break for him and his crew as he brought his hand down and focused his attention on the screen behind the Admiral as he decided to reply in his usual manner. "Sir, there's a problem for the second largest fleet in the UNSC?" Millay let a slight grin tug at his mouth at his own words, while the Admiral could only nod and turn back toward his screen, tapping on a side display. The now darkened display lit up as numbers and figures scrolled across it excitedly, before being replaced with strange images of an oddly colored area of nothingness, lacking even the light of stars.

Vincent licked his dried lips slightly before deciding to tell the Admiral what they were seeing. "A slip-space probe's readout..." He'd used the things before, but rarely found out too much using them, especially with how much they could malfunction. The elderly man nodded and reached his hand up to the screen slowly. "Not long ago, our most distant probe recorded and sent back...this." Matching the Admiral's words perfectly, a strange, amazingly blurry image drifted past the screen. Despite the fact that these probes were useless in his opinion, and the fact that the information they provided was always sketchy at best, Vincent couldn't help but recognize the angled hull of a massive Covenant ship as the Admiral continued. "Shortly after that, the transmission was suddenly cut off and we lost contact with it, as well as with Remote Sensing Station _Kezar_, which was in charge of that sector..."

Almost every ship the Sixth Fleet had to offer was now clustered around Belfast and the _Five Kings_, as some enjoyed calling their only orbital platforms in their pentagon formation directly above Belfast. The _Titan_ shuddered as its engines flared, the large warship slowly drifting from the docking area of the Uppsala station, before accelerating toward the rest of the vessels that dotted the space near VerCrouse. The Covenant would most likely use the exact same route as their missing ship, meaning the UNSC could surprise

them with a wave of metal and missiles.

Vincent watched on the main screen as Frigates and Destroyers gathered around their assigned positions. The Carriers and Cruisers were safely placed in positions where they could use the cannon fodder in front of them as cover from the enemy's super-heated assault. Millay had sent down his Marines for only two real reasons. The first was that he felt they'd deserved some form of break on a real planet breathing in real oxygen after the hell they'd been through. The second was that, even though they had a good number of ships and weapons, he believed they'd be needed down on the surface more than on his ship.

The Captain watched as nearly a hundred Pelicans left their respective ships and headed toward VerCrouse, their engines appearing as small spots of light that moved against the stars around them. Every one of them was overloaded with almost twenty combat-ready Marines and either a Warthog or Scorpion weighing them down, and helping them to plummet towards the base with ease. Vincent felt now would be the perfect time for any of the religious members of the UNSC to say a prayer or two, watching around two-thousand soldiers head down to their deaths.

3. Monterey and Rose

Captain Martin Flagg gazed out of the UNSC Monterey at the Frigates and Destroyers, getting into position. He watched closely as several hundred pelicans deployed down to Belfast, including some of his own. Well, several hundred was an understatement; it was more like something closer to a thousand, each carrying more than a dozen troops in them. "We're sending them to their deaths" he muttered under his breath. "What was that sir?" asked Lily who was stationed at the MAC Controls. The Captain looked over at her smiling brightly, brushing off his disturbing coldness for the moment. "Oh, it was nothing; just complimenting the scenery." The Ensign looked at him for a moment as if trying to read his mind, and turned away giving up. Captain Flagg nodded his head absentmindedly and turned his attention toward the monitors.

"Kiora, are you ready for battle?"

>"Yes sir, and if you don't mind me asking, why aren't we moving into position?"

>"I was just about to ask you to do that for me."<p>

The engines roared to life deep within the Monterey as the ship board AI, Kiora, moved them into position with the rest of the fleet. "Bring her in slowly, Kiora." The Monterey shuddered as the thrusters ignited one last time before they settled into position along with the rest of the fleet. Flagg sighed, exhaling a breath he didn't even realize he was holding. "All right, now that we're settled let's pop a cork of Champagne" he said, easing into the flow of things. Personally, Martin hated the false gravity, but hated null gravity more, so he had gotten used to the feeling. But even though his feet were firmly planted on the deck of the bridge, his mind wandered to another matter of great importance to him.

"Johno, open up a direct link for me please?" asked the Captain. The el-tee at the COM Controls nodded his head, "yes sir. To whom may I ask?" Captain Flagg smiled for a moment, his hazel eyes glittering in

the dim light. "Why, my good old friend Captain Millay, on board the UNSC Titan." Martin sat comfortably in his chair for a moment while the Johnno worked on the COM link, placing his hands behind his head. "All right, COM link established in three... two... one... mark!" The Captain cleared his throat and then spoke, "this is Captain Martin Flagg of the UNSC Monterey, forgive the lack of video communication. Our COM System was damaged in a miniature confrontation on the outskirts of the Sigma VII system with some Free Lancers. I heard about your little" he paused, "encounter, on the Desert World from a little birdie I know. How's your headache my friend?" A smile found its way onto Captain Martin Flagg's face as he reclined in his chair.

Vincent couldn't hold back the soft yawn that escaped from his mouth, cursing himself for his own lack of sleep as he looked back once more at his personal screen. He felt slightly secure as he spent his time watching the ships that surrounded them through one of their external cameras. All he could do was wish that the Covenant came in fewer numbers than them, although that was almost never the case. He was about to return to his battle plans when an all too familiar sound leaked from the COM and whined in his ear, before an equally familiar voice was heard.

"This is Captain Martin Flagg of the UNSC Monterey, forgive the lack of video communication. Our COM System was damaged in a miniature confrontation on the outskirts of the Sigma VII system with some Free Lancers. I heard about your little" he paused, "encounter, on the Desert World from a little birdie I know. How's your headache my friend?"

He couldn't help but chuckle lightly, a sound the bridge crew rarely ever heard, at the thought of such a person being in command of a UNSC Marathon-class Cruiser. Knowing it's an open channel, he responded briefly while resting his elbow against the panel beside him and pressing the side of his face into his palm, somehow relaxing for once as he spoke. "I'm amazed you're still alive, Flagg."

"I'm amazed you're still alive, Flagg..."

"Well, it's kind of hard for me to die you know. I've got a great fucking crew on board this god forsaken ship, and not one of them has stopped, night or night to give those covenant bastards hell." He smiled and shrugged his shoulders as if Vincent could see him, "But hey, you know how it goes. Live to fight another day, and when that day comes, shoot behind you while you run."

Another smile had crept its way to the corner of Captain Flagg's mouth, astonished at even his own sense of security up in the vast void. But then it was gone. "I lost a lot of good men and women out there Vincent, and I've deployed the rest of my troops down to Belfast. Vincent." He stopped for a moment, pausing at what he was going to say. And when he went to stop himself, the words had already come out. "Vincent, I don't think we're going to make it this time." A cold seriousness had crept its way into his eyes and his body had become stiff with the depression of death. If only we could have gotten them back up here safely he thought. If only we could have seen what was right in front of us.

He listened to the man go on to describe briefly what he'd been through, before telling of his own predictions of how this particular

battle would turn out. He nodded slightly as his head was pressed into his hand, not truly thinking about their lack of visibility toward one another and responding in the only way he could think at the harsh moment of reality. Honestly. "You're probably right. If Reach was any example, we'll probably be overrun with ease and be turned into molten bits of debris..."

Vincent couldn't help but let a bit of an optimistic view long forgotten creep into his voice as he continued. "Of course, it's not such a bad way to go. Better than being turned into walking meat-puppets by aliens. Besides, what else can we do? Like those who fought and died at Reach, we shall also go out while fighting for what little humanity remains in this universe." He didn't truly care what the crew who heard him believed as he spoke openly, wanting to know he'd told the truth before dying like he deserved to so long ago.

"The hope that we carry, will carry us in return" said the Captain. Flagg smiled lightly, "a young soldier once told me; he got transferred to the Armengald." He looked around the bridge feeling rather than seeing the agreement of the crew. Closing his eyes, he let his smile fade, and the battle fatigue show. "So far my hope has carried me this far. If not any further, than I'll take those Covies with me." "Sir, reports show that all marines have been deployed planet side" chimed Kiora, the AI. Captain Flagg nodded his head in silent approval, and gave himself a little slap to the face. He snapped back to reality quickly, and checked the diagnostics on the large screen in front of him.

"Vincent, good luck; may god bless you, if you believe in any of that shit" said that Captain before adding, "See you in hell." He nodded to Johno at the COM Controls and he cut the line before Captain Millay could get a message back. "All right, heat the coils, every single one of them" barked the Captain. "But sir, we won't have enough power for the engines!" said Harry at the MAC Controls in protest to this new order. "We're not using the fucking engines!" barked Flagg. The Ensign looked scared for a moment, like a child just beat to the candy and given the evil eye, but did heat the coils. "We're at 10 each sir!" he yelled. Captain Flagg nodded his head and crossed his arms standing up. "Good, keep 'em charging."

o o o

Captain Rasa Maldalay sat in his seat, adjusted so he could see, and observed his crew. Very well, I'll have to help out, ever since our treaty he thought to himself quietly. He put his palm on his cheek, and elbow on the arm rest of the chair, melodically rapping his fingers on the other. "Sergeant Myron, what's our ETA?"

"Sir, ETA is 0148 hours; course of action?" Sgt. Myron curtly replied.

>"Continue on set course."<p>

Rasa was viewing his screen, eyes flicking rapidly around. He looked to his right then asked, "Lieutenant Nguyen, could you please send a transmission to the UNSC Carrier Titan?" he glanced at the view screen momentarily again. "Tell them we're on our way, and our ETA should be..." he paused, "Sgt. Myron, our current ETA is...?"

"Estimated time of arrival is 0047 hours."

He continued his sentence to Lt. Nguyen, "And our current ETA is 0047 hours. Also, we'll send troops to support them planet side, ask if they need anything, we have one spare Shaw-Fujikawa drivers in our cargo, and that's about it." He summed up his thoughts, then turned back to the monitor, then silently whispered to himself "We're going to hell and back."

4. Armada

Rear Admiral Roland Delaney stood on his bridge and gazed into a monitor displaying the space surrounding his ship, watching as his fleet fluttered around silently in preparation for what could be the end of them all. They'd already set out the 'Welcome Mat' for the Covenant, ready and willing to greet them properly the second they entered normal space. The small panel beside him lit up before a practically see-through figure appeared, hovering an inch above the holographic platform with a pale aura shadowing it ominously. The AI known as Akuma stared in the same direction as the Admiral, his long crimson coat moving behind him as if a breeze had somehow found its way into the ship. The rather normal entity-at least when compared with other 'Smart AIs'-stood there casually while performing over a hundred calculations concerning where the enemy would appear and applying his findings to their battle strategy.

The AI spoke in his usual calm tone, sounding like most of the UNSC personnel on the Pflanz after long hours without sleep and lacking any enthusiasm. "We don't have much time left, Admiral. We've lost contact with several other outposts, and their current course has them coming straight for us." Delaney nodded slightly, ignoring the fact that he couldn't see it as he felt there was no turning back for them as he replied in the same dull tone. "Can you estimate their strength?" The small person stood still for a moment before nodding and making several hand gestures as if to visually show it. "Of course; they're no where near the size of the force that hit Reach, but it's no recon mission. At least sixty ships counted so far, with most of them being larger warships." The Admiral nodded before turning towards the SENSOR-OPS station where Lieutenant Branson sat, the AI nearby vanishing automatically. The man had been sitting there staring at that same screen for several hours at this point; though Delaney knew it couldn't be helped. He turned back to his command station and used his right hand to tap on several keys. A red blinking light appeared in the corner of the main screen and he let his index finger hover over the ENTER key, before closing his eyes and taking a deep breath as he heard Branson gasp and cry out to them, "energy spike!"

o o o

Empty space over fifty-thousand kilometers away from the UNSC fleet suddenly became unstable and wavered irregularly, a large area of black nothingness swirling into itself as dozens upon dozens of Covenant warships slipped into the system. Nearly eighty deadly vessels swarmed together as one, all of them appearing as futuristic insects eager to slaughter their enemy. Everything from lowly Frigates to fully loaded Assault Carriers advanced towards VerCrouse, their only purpose being to spill human blood.

o o o

Delaney opened his eyes only to see his screen filled with enemies now, his finger still above the key as he did. "Numbers..." The perky Akuma appeared once more and stared at the wall of ships on the main monitor. "I'm counting eighteen Battle Cruisers, eight Assault Carriers, twenty-four Destroyers, thirty Frigates, and one unidentified vessel, most likely their flagship." The Admiral stared at the Covenant fleet a moment longer before letting his index finger fall, clicking on the _ENTER_ key once and watching as the entire fleet was engulfed in a bright flash. "Now what are the estimates?"

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The Frigates and Destroyers of the Covenant front line were slammed by a sudden wave of pressure and nuclear power, the dozen or so HORNET nuclear mines providing the UNSC with a temporary brick wall to hide behind, even though it wouldn't last. Shields sizzled and failed before the hulls of ships they were supposed to protect boiled and bubbled before being vaporized, their technology not saving them from an explosion that could envelop and ravage even their mightiest ships. The clouds of destruction quickly cleared and revealed a sea of debris for the enemy to wade through in order to get to the humans, the powerful shields of the Cruisers and Carriers shimmering behind the glittering haze.

o o o

Akuma grinned reflexively at his new calculations, feeling the automatic sense of satisfaction his personality was supposed to maintain toward the savage killing as he came up with a list of enemy survivors. "Seventeen Covenant Battle Cruisers, five Assault Carriers, sixteen Destroyers, eighteen Frigates, and that same flagship whose shield seems to have deflected the blast with ease; I'll try and figure out the force needed to break its shield by comparing its size with the power output of known Covenant engine systems." Delaney was slightly surprised they'd managed to destroy as many as they did with their first attack as he quickly went about planning their second assault. "Coordinate with every ship carrying a Shiva warhead and keep them in reserve for when the enemy gets closer...Firing them off now will just get them blown up halfway. Organize MAC firing time according to ship size. Have our Frigates target their own and do the same for their capital ships...Lets take those out." As he spoke he pointed towards the group of carriers towards the center of the pack, knowing they needed to be annihilated as soon as possible before the situation became even more like at Reach. The massive Super MAC guns their fleet was clustered around adjusted their aim slightly before firing five rounds of molten ferric-tungsten towards the heart of the Covenant threat, hoping to rip it out as soon as possible.

o o o

Rasa typed an eight number code onto his screen, watching it light up, then a holographic image of a man walked onto his armrest, sitting down and smoking a pipe. The image looked at him with cold eyes, and changed into the image of an animal, from the looks of it, it appeared to be the now extinct Grizzly Bear. "AI, identify yourself, what is your name?" The AI changed back into the old man,

looking at Rasa again, this time quizzically, then answered slyly, "I go by many names, you may call me Klem. If you are worthy, I will inform you of my other names another time but for now, what do you require?" Rasa looked back at the AI, gleaming, "Well then, Klem... are you able to pilot this ship efficiently in battle?"

The AI nodded, transforming itself yet again into a new being, this time what appeared to be a Spartan with armor not so thick. "Naturally, I can pilot anything, I'm no "Smart A.I."; such as the renown Cortana, but I can do very much." Rasa chuckled slightly, then a wave of coldness overcame him, and he became serious again. "I would appreciate it, while during the invasion, if you were to pilot this ship as how to best get our troops planet-side to assist the UNSC. Then set coordinates for a Slipstream jump to the UNSC ships left flank and cover from there, and order all other ships to take defensive perimeter around VerCrouse once we get the troops planet-side."

The A.I. nodded in acknowledgement, and then once more changed into the old man. "And judging by your calculations, and your defensive formations that I studied a moment ago, you want us to take; Defensive Formation Hotel? That's a bit drastic don't you think? And if we use a Slipstream jump so close, won't that drain some power?"

>"Nothing is too drastic when it comes to a battle with the Covenant Klem. Just follow my orders, and let's get these damn troops planet-side. I have a quick announcement I should make to the soldiers though." <p>

He pressed a holographic key on his screen, and then looked at Lt. Nguyen.

>"Go for it sir!" Nguyen said turning around with a thumb's up, grinning widely. For having a scar across his face, and balding grey hair, he looked as young as ever these past weeks. He began speaking to every soldier in the ship through the intercom, "Alright soldiers, you'll be fighting alongside our old enemies, so don't do anything stupid. We need you to get down there, and finish the Covenant bastards off for good. And remember what I'm going to say next!" He paused, breathing deeply, calming himself. "***Success is relative. It is what we are trying to fix after making a mess of things.** With that he sat down.

o o o

Captain Rasa Maldalay shivered with fear as Klem made small adjustments to their trajectory, looking as a plasma salvo whizzed through space beside the bridge. Klem had taken a new form, this time a man wearing a wolf head as a helmet, and a rather large blade on his back. "Klem, are all the troops off of our ships?"

>"Affirmative, now quickly, brace yourselves." <p>

Lt. Nguyen yelled over the sounds of battle, "Incoming transmission from the UNSC Cruiser _Pflanzer_. We are to hold our last two Shiva Warheads until close range. We are to fire our MAC charges towards their capital ships. Acknowledge sir?"

"Acknowledged Lieutenant."

Rasa glanced back at the bridge window, and just happened to see the

Super MAC guns fire off 5 charges towards the Covenant Fleet. He sighed, "I had almost forgotten those, is everyone ready to finish this?" he screamed. From every Navy personnel on the bridge, he heard dignifying yells, and could of swore he heard someone mention firing an MAC round through one little Covenant body when they finished this. He grinned, this is their time.

5. Spartan019

A large section of the enemy fleet broke off from the rest, the group aiming to go around the haze of shrapnel and hit the humans from the side, while the larger force plowed directly through it. The frigate Blinded Spirit only made it partly through the debris field before a super round punched cleanly through the vessel, crippling it immediately before causing it to explode into a vibrant display of futuristic destruction. The second group closed in around the two CCS-class assault carriers Fortitude and Solitude, which were protected by the other smaller vessels. One destroyer, the Apparition, barely managed to block one round, which ripped through its nose and ruined its threatening capabilities as plasma and bits of its hull shot outward into space from the gaping wound it'd taken.

Only two of the five orbital stations were firing at the second group of vessels, the others still having to concentrate on the greater force as it cleared the shield-like debris, the sides of each ship glowing angrily with charged plasma. The human ships all recoiled around the same time as they let loose their own smaller MAC rounds, a wall of metal tearing through the space between them towards the enemy as it discharged its form of destruction. Plasma and MAC trails lined the battle zone as the human projectiles found their targets first, impacting on the shields of the Covenant's smaller vessels and breaking through, before multiple other rounds finished them off. The larger cruisers would have to be saved for the orbital stations as they continued their assault, throwing one round after another at them as the wall of plasma neared the human fleet. The heated energy violently swirled and converged on the UNSC forces, knowing little could save them from the ultimate destruction that followed.

o o o

Through the black of night, a bulbous Covenant Destroyer stalked the stars like a shark poised to attack. Its lateral lines glowed a violet-angry red, ready to fire.

>It looked as if it was prepared to fire on the guppies of the UNSC defensive fleet; about to hurl its massive rage entombed within plasma upon the brave men and women of the Human race. <p>

A grey like streak sliced through the vacuum at breakneck speed, slamming itself into the stern shields, which failed to support the massive strain placed upon it. They collapsed, and the bullet pierced into the inner decks, emerging out the other side followed by a huge eruption of flame. Far to the left of the internecine, the UNSC Armengald erupted at full speed, its escort fighters following beside it proudly, ready to take on any foe that threatened the wounded ship.

"_This is Captain Benjamin David Resnick of the UNSC Marathon Class

Crusier Armengald. We are probably the 'limp leg' of the fleet, so we were positioning ourselves behind the fleet to support long range cover fire. All fighters in Wolf, Sigma, and Rouge squadrons begin your attack formations and begin to move into position. Remember your job boys. And I have a question for you guys... Did you start the party without us?_"

The _Armengalds_ positioned itself behind the ongoing fight, its engines turned to the planet, its nose pointed at the battle taking place. Eruptions of fire and plasma littered the space above the planet. Another slug ripped from the MAC cannon of the _Armengald_ and tore through space, impacting against a Covenant outer defense shield.

o o o

"Sir, the magnetic coils are hot! I'm reading 110!" yelled Lt. McCoy, turning in his seat. Flagg nodded his head looking out of the bridge towards the covenant, particularly the large covenant flagship with the "impenetrable" shields. The ship was of incredible size, bigger than at least six or seven of their largest vessels combined. _"The amount of troops lying inside its belly must be enormous"_ thought the Captain.

"How many soldiers do we currently have on board, Kiora?"

>"Approximately three dozen orbital drop shock troopers, sir."

>"And how many wounded?" "Twenty-four, sir." "Shit."

Captain Flagg had to think about what he wanted to do next. He wasn't about to let the wounded die on his ship without giving them a chance. The only option there was to send them down to Belfast where they could hopefully take care of them, which was sadly, oh so unlikely. "How many pelican's do we have docked?" he asked. The reply, _"two pelicans are docked and ready for launch, sir. What are you proposing?"_ The A.I. had her ways of getting to know what she wanted to know, but Flagg always knew his way around her. Unfortunately this was one of those things that you couldn't. "Evacuate all wounded via pelican; our Hell Jumpers have an alternate way of getting to the planet." Of course he was talking about an orbital drop, something that could either kill or keep someone alive.

"Wake our friend up, will you Kiora? I need to have a chat with him."

"Yes sir."

o o o

"So Jonny, when you going to give me your sisters number?" said the navy technician standing next to Jonathan. Randal, the always 'sensuous' navy tech was still on the look out for Johnny's sister, Mary. "Dude, what the hell is it with you and her? Give up already, I'm not giving you her number" said Jonathan sitting up to check the monitor. Previously a few beeps had come from the panel but they had ignored them since they were in a deep conversation about women and their sexual fantasies. Randal was really doing all the talking.

"Shit, priority sierra-too" murmured the astonished corporal. Randal quickly picked his feet up off the monitor and sat straight, "are you serious?" "Yeah, look at it for yourself." Jonathan moved out of the way so that Randal could take a look at the screen, "shit, you weren't joking."

Randal moved into a new seat and began typing in commands while Jonny walked to the elevator, went down one set, and then stepped into the Cryo-bay. Jonny walked up to the one on the left nearest to the door and typed in a few commands to synchronize with the commands Randal had put in. "All right, systems are coming online. Pop the case!" said Randal over the COM system. Jonny nodded his head and turned to the cryo-tube, watching the hinges pop loose with steam and the front of the casing rise. "Welcome back, sir" he said saluting the figure stepping out of the cryo-tube.

o o o

Spartan-019 opened his eyes after thawing out. The inside of the UNSC _Monterey's_ cryo-bay was a sight for sore eyes, literally. "Welcome back, sir" said the techie as the Spartan stepped out of the cryo-tube. Once he was out he turned his neck to the right, and then to the left listening to the popping sound. A small sigh escaped his mouth before he looked up in the cryo-bridge. "The Captain wouldn't have me woken up for nothing; what are my orders soldier?" he asked Randal, the techie up in the cryo-bridge. The techie spoke into the COM, "you're to report to the bridge as soon as you pick up a weapon, sir." Jonny looked up at the green clad armor in awe, never having met one personally before. "All right" said Spartan-019, "I'll stop by the armory since it's on the way." Jonny and Randal just watched as the Spartan made his way out of the armory and into the corridor.

The warrior made his way down the corridor about 45 paces or so and made a left stopping at a window. He gazed out into space viewing the space battle between the Covenant and the UNSC. The golden visor of his helmet reflected off the tinted windows as he watched the battle begin to thrive, "shit." 019 began to jog at a minimal pace to the armory which was 50 paces straight and then another 50 left. Once inside he quickly walked by the O.D.S.T.'s that were getting ready for battle and straight to the assault weapons rack. Reaching up he grabbed a MA6B Pulse Action Assault Rifle and placed two SMG's on his hips. Turning he found four fragmentation grenades which he added to his belt along with several clips of ammunition. Once that was down he quickly walked to the other end of the armory and exited up the elevator. As the elevator began to rise he felt a tremor and grasped the wall quickly for support, _"something just exploded."_

o o o

"Sir, it's a hit! Covenant vessel destroyed!" yelled Lt. McCoy gripping the console as the tremor shook the bridge. Captain Martin Flagg gripped his chair, trying to keep his teeth from grinding. "I noticed, damn it!" he yelled, "couldn't you have fired when he wasn't so god damned close?!" The Captain shook his head and stood up, stepping over to the COM, "all O.D.S.T.'s are to report to their capsules for immediate launch; ETA five minutes!" He then pressed a few buttons on the Ensigns console before speaking, **"All personnel are to report to their battle stations! This is a priority alpha transmission!"**

Flagg turned, "Kiora, have the wounded been evacuated?" "Affirmative, sir; all wounded personnel has been evacuated planet side." The Captain sighed and took a few steps before McCoy yelled out again, "firing MAC 2 now!" Flagg was barely able to stand as the next MAC round busted through a small covenant vessel. Another tremor ran out through the Monterey, "gods damn it, where the hell is Runner!"

As soon as the tremor died down the ETA read 4:45 and counting. Spartan-019 stepped onto the bridge as soon as his code name was called. "Sir, Spartan-019 reporting for duty!" he said stopping and saluting. The Captain looked up at him and gave him a half-assed salute, "good, you're here. I need you to get down onto that planet and make sure we win this god damn war. You know the protocol; you'll be taking Kiora with you." The Spartan nodded his head as the Captain reached over to a console near his chair where he typed in a code. A small crystal chip popped out of the slot which was taken by the Captain before another tremor shook the Monterey, causing the Captain to fall face first into his chair. Once he got up he turned to McCoy and yelled, "where the hell did that come from?!"

The Lt. responded, "Another Covenant vessel has been destroyed approximately two kilometers from our starboard. It seems the Armengald has just joined the fight, sir!" _"Did you start the party without us?"_ The Captain shook his head making his blurry vision disappear before handing the Spartan the chip. "Take good care of her son" said the Captain, "she's one in a million." Spartan-019 nodded his head accepting the chip and saluting before slipping it into his helmet. A cold and vibrant sensation chilled his bones for a moment before Kiora spoke up in his head, _"it's good to have you back Nineteen."_ The Captain turned and looked out of the bridge only to see what he feared the most. Countless covenant drop ships and seraph fighters were emptying out of the covenant flagship. When the Captain turned back around to acknowledge the Spartan one last time he was gone.

o o o

Spartan-019 exited the elevator and ran down the corridor about 100 paces before turning left in the room with all of the pods. Once he entered he looked around at all of them. Thirty pods with thirty green lights were there, and another five were empty. The Petty Officer made his way quickly over to the next to last pod on the right where he got inside, shut the pod, and then hit the green light. The ETA read 0:11 seconds on the Spartans HUD. _"So Leito, you ready for this? It'll be a bumpy ride"_ asked Kiora. The Spartan put his MA6B into the slot on the left for easy access once he made it down onto the planet, "I'm always ready Kiora; I'm a Spartan." The ETA hit the 0:00 mark and the drop pods slid down their chutes and down into space for a moment and then entered the atmosphere. Inside the pod the Spartan was shaking around but he had everything under control. "This is one hell of a day."

End
file.